

CLAIMS

1 1. A method of demonstrating a virtual server service that provides use of a
2 host server to a plurality of clients over a computer network, the method comprising:
3 receiving an active request from an active client to send an active control
4 window of an active account of the virtual server service from the host server to an active
5 client system;
6 receiving a first request at the host server from a prospective client to
7 demonstrate the virtual server service; and
8 under control of the host server, sending a simulated control window of the
9 virtual server service to the prospective client system in response to the first request, the
10 simulated control window having a plurality of demonstration components that simulate
11 corresponding system administration components of the active control window of the virtual
12 server service.

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving a second request from the prospective client system after sending the
3 simulated control window, the second request being a request to send a first systems manager
4 page of a first demonstration component of the simulated control window; and
5 sending the first systems manager page via the host server system to the
6 prospective client system in response to the second request, the first systems manager page
7 having at least one first element that can be selected by the prospective client to request that
8 the host server system send another web page related to the first systems manager page.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving a second request from the prospective client system after sending the
3 simulated control window, the second request being a request to send a first systems manager
4 page of a first demonstration component of the simulated control window; and
5 sending the first systems manager page via the host server system to the
6 prospective client system in response to the second request, the first systems manager page

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1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein the software manager component is a
2 URL link to a software manager web page comprising a first listing of hypothetically
3 installed software packages, a second listing of hypothetically available software packages, a
4 first element for hypothetically selecting the installed software packages, and a second
5 element for selecting the available software packages, and wherein sending a systems
6 manager page comprises sending the software manager page to the prospective client.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 receiving a third request from the prospective client system to view a first
3 software package page of a specific software package in response to the prospective client
4 selecting the second element of the software manager page; and
5 sending the first software package page via the host server system to the client
6 system, the first software package page having a selector for hypothetically installing the
7 specific software package.

1 9. A method of demonstrating a service that provides a computerized
2 transaction to a plurality of clients via a server system coupled to a computer network, the
3 method comprising:
4 receiving a first request from a prospective client via a prospective client
5 system to demonstrate the computerized transaction; and
6 sending a simulated client interface to the client system via the server system in
7 response to the first request, the simulated client interface having a plurality of demonstration
8 components that simulate corresponding transaction components of an active client interface
9 of the computerized service.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein the computerized transaction is
2 providing a virtual server service via a host server system, and wherein:
3 receiving a first request comprises receiving a request to demonstrate the
4 virtual server service; and
5 sending a simulated client interface comprises sending a simulated control
6 window of the virtual server service via a host server system, the simulated control window

7 having a plurality of demonstration components that simulate corresponding system
8 administration components of an active control window of the virtual server service.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

2 receiving a second request from the prospective client system after sending the
3 simulated control window, the second request being a request to send a first systems manager
4 page of a first demonstration component of the simulated control window; and

5 sending the first systems manager page via the host server system to the
6 prospective client system in response to the second request, the first systems manager page
7 having at least one first element that can be selected by the prospective client to request that
8 the host server system send another web page related to the first systems manager page.

1 12. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

2 receiving a second request from the prospective client system after sending the
3 simulated control window, the second request being a request to send a first systems manager
4 page of a first demonstration component of the simulated control window; and

5 sending the first systems manager page via the host server system to the
6 prospective client system in response to the second request, the first systems manager page
7 having at least one input field that the prospective client can input a hypothetical value for
8 configuring the virtual server service.

1 13. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

2 receiving a second request from the prospective client system after sending the
3 simulated control window, the second request being a request to send a first systems manager
4 page of a first demonstration component of the simulated control window; and

5 sending the first systems manager page via the host server system to the
6 prospective client system in response to the second request, the first systems manager page
7 having at least one pull down menu having a plurality a choices from which the prospective
8 client can select a hypothetical value for configuring the virtual server service.

1 14. The method of claim 10 wherein the demonstration components of the
2 simulated control window comprise a server status component, an event manager component,

3 a software manager component, a file manager component, an email manager component, a
4 user manager component, a web manager component, and a database manager component,
5 and wherein the method further includes:

6 receiving a second request from the prospective client system after sending the
7 simulated control window to the prospective client system, the second request being
8 generated from the prospective client system by selection of one of the demonstration
9 components; and

10 sending a selected systems manager page to the prospective client system in
11 response to the second request, the selected systems manager page corresponding to the
12 selected demonstration component.

1 15. A method of demonstrating a virtual server service that provides use of a
2 host server system to a plurality of clients over a computer network, the method comprising:

3 under control of a prospective client system, sending a first request to the host
4 server for demonstrating the virtual server service; and

5 displaying at the prospective client system a simulated control window of the
6 virtual server service received from the host server system in response to the first request
7 from the prospective client system, the simulated control window having a plurality of
8 demonstration components that simulate corresponding administration components of an
9 active control window of the virtual server service.

1 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

2 sending a second request from the prospective client system after receiving the
3 simulated control window, the second request being a request to receive a first systems
4 manager page of a first demonstration component of the simulated control window; and

5 displaying the first systems manager page at the prospective client system in
6 response to the second request, the first systems manager page having at least one first
7 element that can be selected by the prospective client to send another request to the host
8 server system for another web page related to the first systems manager page.

1 20. A system for demonstrating a computerized transaction to a prospective
2 client, comprising:

3 a computer having a central processing unit that executes instructions to
4 construct and transmit active account messages and demonstration messages, a memory for
5 storing instructions to be executed, and a non-volatile storage medium;

6 an active account module stored on the non-volatile storage medium, the active
7 account module having an active account database containing data for active clients and an
8 active account control window having a plurality of active account messages containing
9 system administration components that an active client can use to effectuate a computerized
10 transaction;

11 a demonstration module stored on the non-volatile storage medium, the
12 demonstration module having a plurality of demonstration messages containing
13 demonstration components that simulate corresponding system administration components of
14 the active account control window; and

15 instructions stored in the memory of the computer that cause the central
16 processor to -

17 (a) retrieve a demonstration message from the demonstration module
18 in response to a request from a prospective client without first setting up an
19 active trial account for the prospective client, and

20 (b) transmit the retrieved demonstration message to a prospective
21 client system of the prospective client using a transmission medium.

1 21. The system of claim 20 wherein:

2 the active account messages comprise a plurality of dynamic web pages that
3 provide active tools for sending instructions to the computer to effectuate the computerized
4 transaction; and

5 the demonstration messages comprise static web pages that provide replicas of
6 the active account web pages and replicas of the active tools that do not provide instructions
7 to effectuate the computerized transaction.

1 22. The system of claim 20 wherein the computerized transaction is
2 providing a virtual server service to resellers for configuring a virtual server via a computer
3 network, and wherein:

4 the system administration messages comprise a plurality of dynamic web pages
5 that provide active tools for sending instructions to the computer to configure the virtual
6 server service of the active client; and

7 the demonstration messages comprise static web pages that provide replicas of
8 the active account web pages and replicas of the active tools, the replicas of the active tools
9 being disabled from sending instructions to the computer to configure the virtual server
10 service.

1 23. The system of claim 22 wherein the demonstration messages comprise
2 an event manager web page having an element to hypothetically control an event of the
3 virtual server service.

1 24. The system of claim 22 wherein the demonstration messages comprise a
2 software manager web page having an element to hypothetically install and/or uninstall a
3 software package of the virtual server service.

1 25. The system of claim 22 wherein the demonstration messages comprise
2 an email manager web page having an element to hypothetically control an email unit of the
3 virtual server service.

1 26. The system of claim 22 wherein the demonstration messages comprise a
2 database manager web page having an element to hypothetically control a database of the
3 virtual server service.

1 27. A virtual server service system for providing a virtual server service to
2 an active client, comprising:

3 a host server having a central processing unit that executes instructions to
4 construct and transmit active account messages and demonstration messages, a memory for
5 storing instructions to be executed, and a non-volatile storage medium;

6 an active account module stored on the non-volatile storage medium, the active
7 account module having an active account database containing data for active clients and an
8 active account control window having a plurality of active account messages containing
9 system administration components that the active client can use to configure the virtual
10 server service in a desired configuration;

11 a demonstration module stored on the non-volatile storage medium, the
12 demonstration module having a plurality of demonstration messages containing
13 demonstration components that simulate corresponding system administration components of
14 the active account control window; and

15 instructions stored in the memory of the computer that cause the central
16 processor to -

17 (a) retrieve a demonstration message from the demonstration module
18 in response to a request from a prospective client without first setting up an
19 active trial account for the prospective client, and

20 (b) transmit the retrieved demonstration message to a prospective
21 client system of the prospective client using a transmission medium.

1 28. The system of claim 27 wherein:

2 the system administration messages comprise a plurality of dynamic web pages
3 that provide active tools for sending instructions to the computer to configure the virtual
4 server service of the active client; and

5 the demonstration messages comprise static web pages that provide replicas of
6 the active account web pages and replicas of the active tools, the replicas of the active tools
7 being disabled from sending instructions to the computer to configure the virtual server
8 service.

1 29. The system of claim 27 wherein the demonstration messages comprise
2 an event manager web page having an element to hypothetically control an event of the
3 virtual server service.

1 30. The system of claim 27 wherein the demonstration messages comprise a
2 software manager web page having an element to hypothetically install and/or uninstall a
3 software package of the virtual server service.

1 31. The system of claim 27 wherein the demonstration messages comprise
2 an email manager web page having an element to hypothetically control an email unit of the
3 virtual server service.

1 32. The system of claim 27 wherein the demonstration messages comprise a
2 database manager web page having an element to hypothetically control a database of the
3 virtual server service.

1 33. A computer-readable medium having contents that cause a computer
2 system to demonstrate a virtual server service that provides use of a host server to a plurality
3 of clients over a computer network by:

4 sending an active control window of an active account of the virtual server
5 service from the host server to an active client system in response to an active request from
6 the active client system; and

7 sending a simulated control window of the virtual server service to a
8 prospective client system that does not have access to an active account in response to a
9 request received at the host server from a prospective client to demonstrate the virtual server
10 service.